



JMU Honors Program Seminar Abroad

Art and Politics in Medici Florence

Florence, Italy

May 9 – May 29, 2011 (tentative)



JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY



Florence is an extraordinary site for the kind of interdisciplinary learning promoted in this seminar.



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JMU 2010

Office of the HONORS PROGRAM



Art and Politics in Medici Florence

This will be a six-credit Honors Seminar on art, political thought, and culture in Florence in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It will require some preparatory work in the preceding semester and reflective work in the succeeding semester, but will be centered on three weeks in Florence, May 9 – 29, 2011 (tentative). The seminar will be open to first- and second-year Track I and Track II honors students. Completion of the seminar will meet the six-credit Honors Program seminar requirement.

Florence is an extraordinary site for the kind of interdisciplinary learning promoted in this seminar. Late medieval Florence was, to a large extent, a republic in which political power was relatively broadly based. The Medici family enjoyed a sustained influence on the ongoing development of political life in Florence as powerful and wealthy citizens and later, beginning with Cosimo I, the first Grand Duke of Tuscany, as a powerful noble family. Florence was also the location of the artistic developments now associated with the birth of Italian Renaissance art, many of which depended on the patronage of the Medici. Donatello and Brunelleschi spent their entire careers in Florence, and other artists like Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo worked in Florence before moving to other cities. Major authors, including Dante and Boccaccio, are important for understanding Medici Florence. During the Renaissance, Florence was also a vibrant center for the revival of Platonism, a movement that influenced the development of humanism in modern Europe.

Seminar Abroad Program

The experience will begin with approximately biweekly two-hour meetings on campus in the spring semester of 2011.

Students will use this semester to do readings, watch films, attend guest lectures, and complete assignments to become acquainted with the historical background and some art historical, literary, political, and cultural information related to Medici Florence. They will use this period to get to know one another and the instructors and begin a small Florence-related research project which they can pursue in Florence and complete before the September symposium. Student research goals will help in finalizing the trip itinerary.

Once in Florence, the group will become immersed in the cultural history of the city. The students will meet with the instructors in the mornings for classroom work, held at the Palazzo Capponi, JMU's premises in Florence.



Afternoons and evenings will feature field trips and events, including visits to most of the major museums and cultural sites in Florence and day trips to Siena and Medici estates in the environs of Florence. There will be a free three-day weekend, allowing students to travel to Venice or Rome or even further afield.

Upon returning to JMU, students will help plan and will participate in a September 2011 symposium and reception centered on the seminar topic.

Dr. Linda Cabe Halpern, University Studies Dean and Professor of Art History, Dr. Richard Halpern, an expert in late medieval literature and culture, and Dr. Scott Hammond, Professor of Political Science, will be the seminar instructors.



Eligible students can apply to participate in this seminar through JMU's Short-Term Study Abroad application process. That process, including the application deadline, is described at http://www.jmu.edu/international/abroad/forms_jmu_shortterm.shtml. The application process will open at the start of the fall 2010 semester. The number of students will be limited to approximately 20.

Students who participate in the seminar will be charged for six credits of 2011 summer school tuition and a



program fee. Some need-based financial assistance will be available. The tuition and program fees will cover tuition, housing, meals, cell phone rental, local transportation, field trip transportation, event tickets, and more. The fees will not include travel to and from Florence, passports, personal expenses, and certain books that may be required.

In Summary:

- Earn six academic credits
- Complete your honors seminar requirements
- Study abroad
- Experience Florence
- See some of the greatest art in the world
- Get to know JMU faculty members outside of the classroom

Please direct any questions to Dr. Linda Cabe Halpern, halperl@jmu.edu, 540-568-7770.



